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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

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FROM : Amembassy Ouagadougou DATE: October 10, 1978

SUBJECT: Upper Volta: Summary for September 1978

REF :

UNGA - Foreign Minister Moussa Kargougou left for New York to lead the Upper Volta delegation to the 33rd United Nations General Assembly. Following the UNGA, the Foreign Minister will travel to Tokyo and Seoul. The Tokyo trip follows a visit to Ouagadougou in September of a delegation from Japan's Foreign Ministry. The Japanese are soliciting Voltan support for Japan's Security Council seat bid.

OFNACER - The National Cereals Office, OFNACER, responsible for the distribution of grain at stable government-selected prices underwent a leadership change in September. On September 18, the Minister of Rural Development, Pale Welte, announced that OFNACER Director Yougbare, in office since April, was fired. His replacement is a little known technocrat named Banse who was educated at the Ecole d'Administration in Tunis. Yougbare's management of OFNACER had been effective -- the best evidence being OFNACER's placing of 37,000 tons of reserve stocks in warehouses throughout the country during the recent rainy season. The likely reason for Yougbare's dismissal was his association with opposition political leader Joseph Ouedraogo. Another element was the possibility of his going public with evidence of massive corruption during the previous OFNACER administration implicating some present and former members of the Government.

Censorship - On September 20, the entire press-run of the Voltan daily L'Observateur was seized by the government. The paper's questionable article concerned the "Boussama Affair". It reported a large armed vigilante group in the village of

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY EC DATE 3 MAR 1982

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Boussama which at the instigation of the village chief marched to seize and kill the local government administrator. National Security Forces were called in and successfully stopped the vigilante group.

Upper Volta's Trial of the Century - Voltan media was dominated in September by the trial in Bobo-Dioulasso of three men charged with cutting human heads from live victims for sale as fetishes used in burial services. Eight thousand people turned out to surround the courtroom on the trial's opening day, September 13. On September 15, following a fair, open, and well-covered trial, the three accused were executed by a firing squad.

Football Holiday - The government called a holiday on September 18 for the citizens of Ouagadougou to celebrate the victory of the city's soccer club over the opposition team from Egypt in the preliminary rounds of the Africa cup.

Boyatt Credentials - U.S. Ambassador Thomas D. Boyatt presented his credentials to President Lamizana on September 21.

Presidential travel - President Lamizana left on September 23 on a private visit to France and West Germany. In Europe he met with President Giscard D'Estaing and with FRG President Scheel. The main topic of discussion was economic assistance.

Baba Sy promotion - Former Defense Minister Baba Sy was promoted on September 22 to General of the Voltan Armed Forces. Baba Sy and President Lamizana are the only Voltans to hold this rank.

Satellite conference - A conference of OAU states concerning the utilization of satellite remote sensing data was held in Ouagadougou from September 26 to September 29. The conference ratified a constitution for an African Council on Remote Sensing and assessed financial contributions from the member states.

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